

FACULTY OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Thursday Noon Series

12:10 pm • WALTER HALL
EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 1989



HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE ENSEMBLES
TIMOTHY McGEE, director

present

L'Amfiparnaso
A Madrigal Comedy

by

Orazio Vecchi

Meredith Hall, Hope Nightingale, Elisabeth Pomes, soprano
Diane English, alto
Jay Lambie, tenor
Bryan Martin, bass

• A D M I S S I O N F R E E •

see over ...

L'Amfiparnaso, composed in 1594 (first printed 1597), is one of the earliest known madrigal comedies. This type of work is closely allied to the *commedia dell'arte*, borrowing characters and plots from the stage genre. It is, as the first madrigal in L'Amfiparnaso tells us, drama for the ear instead of the eye.

In creating this comedy of fourteen madrigals, the composer has pieced together a musical version of a standard set of *commedia dell'arte* scenes involving two pairs of sentimental lovers, Lucio and Isabella, Lelio and Nisa, with a number of other stock *commedia* characters. The central figure in L'Amfiparnaso is Isabella, who believes her Lucio is dead and, in despair, considers taking her own life. The story ends with the happy reunion of the two young lovers, but along the way the various comic characters of the Italian theatre put in their appearances. Madrigals depict the bumbling servant Pierulin and his pathetic master Pantalone who pay a call on the earthly Hortensia; there is the traditional humorous misunderstanding between Italian-speaking Zanni and the Spanish-speaking Captain; and the inevitable cross-currents of misrepresentation and mistaken information that have always been the stock in the trade of comedy.

L'Amfiparnaso is a masterpiece of madrigal writing, demonstrating the ability of music to emulate theatre by painting scenes, portraying characters, and evoking a myriad of emotions. Considerable virtuosity is required of the singers who must deliver all of the dialogue switching from character to character, while rapidly changing moods, emotions, voice ranges, and dialects.

With its wide-sweeping emotional extremes, innocent lovers and silly old men, L'Amfiparnaso presents a charming example of the versatile Renaissance madrigal at its height.

Orazio Vecchi (1550-1605), worked in several cities in northern Italy before finally settling in Modena, his place of birth. He wrote most of his own texts, and much of his music has overtones of the theatre. Vecchi delights in writing abrupt and dramatic contrasts, a trait clearly demonstrated by his most famous work, L'Amfiparnaso.

Historical Performance Ensembles consists of a number of chamber groups involved in the interpretation of music according to the style of its time. The ensembles include graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Toronto, who perform under the supervision of Timothy McGee and David Smith.

We gratefully acknowledge the help of Mr. Fred Perruzza who assisted with the costumes and staging, and Professor Gianrenzo Clivio who gave advice on pronunciation of the Italian dialects.

PROLOGUE. LELIO*

Although you, illustrious spectators,
Are accustomed to seeing only tragedies
Or comedies embellished in sundry manners,
Do not disclaim this our comedy
Which is certainly not graced
With a rich and fancy stage,
But is contrived with double novelty.
The city in which this work is performed
Is the great showplace, the world,
Hence everyone desires to hear it.
But meanwhile, know
That the spectacle of which I speak
Is beheld by the imagination
Which it penetrates through the ear,
Not through the eye.
Therefore, be silent!
And instead of seeing, listen!

ACT ONE, Scene One. Pantalone, Pedrolino, Hortensia

Pan. O Pierulin where are you?
Where are you Pierulin?
Ped. Sir, I can't come, I'm up in the kitchen.
Pan. Knave, dog, what are you doing in the kitchen?
Ped. I'm cramming things down my gullet
That sing all day, Cluck,
Pi pi ri pi
Cu cu ru cu.
Pan. O brute, what you mean to say
Is chickens and pigeons. Quickly, come here!
Ped. What do you wish of me Sir Planter of Lemons.
Pan. One plants radishes not lemons.
Call Hortensia, you lazy rascal!
Ped. Hortensia, Hortensia!
Pan. What does she say?
Ped. She says to you, "Farewell!"

Pan. Pig! Wait, I'll call her.
Hortensia, Hortensia!
Hor. What pest keeps calling Hortensia?
Pan. One of your servants.
Hor. What kind of servant? Go hang yourself!
Childish old fool,
Do you think I am a common piece?
Pan. Softly, softly, dear woman.
Permit me, if you will, to say
Only a word between you and me.
Hor. No, I will not, no!
When I know it, I know it.
Flo flo flo flo.
Behold! The smart-looking one!
I say! What a body!
No doubt I would have pleasure.
Flo flo flo flo.
Pan. Oh poor Pantalon, O ungrateful woman.
When next you want it, I will not!

ACT ONE, Scene Two. Lelio & Nisa

Lel. What do you wish to say, my life,
With the gift of this narcissus,
Which died because it too greatly
Loved its beauteous countenance?

Nisa. That I alone am the admirer
Of my glorious (as you say) visage.
Lel. Does not the example of the flower,
The severe and grim fate of Narcissus,
Touch your heart?
Love another, for self-love brings destruction.

ACT ONE, Scene Three. Gratiano, Pantalone

Gra. Now, let us bring this to a confusion.
I tell you, Mr. Pantalon, I want the girl.
Do you grasp me? peck me? dig me?
Pan. I understand, cauldron of All Soul's Day.
Give me your hand, the girl is yours.
Gra. Do you really mean it?
Pan. From my heart.
Gra. You mock me.
Pan. No, on my word of honor.
Gra. Oh my dear lass.
Oh lass, foremost among the lasses,
Who is picked from all the host of lasses.
Pan. Begone with your lasses!
Steed of Orlando.
O wretched brute,
Among the other brutes,

The greatest brute
Of all the host of brutes.
Gra. I want to say that I am so happy
To have this girl
That I wish to dance for you,
And sing for you,
And jump up and down before you.
Pan. OK then Doctor, I'll play for you:
Tantara tantara ta
Tantara tantara ta.
Doctor, you really seem to be a second Orpheus
Who draws all of the animals,
Plants, and stones to himself.
Thus your wisdom attracts the children,
Gathers stones, trees, and stumps,
And finally the butcher's beasts run hither
And sniff at your garments.
Therefore, let us step into the house.



ACT TWO, Scene One. Lucio alone

What should I, wretched Lucio, do
When I am robbed of all my happiness?
O false and foolish love,
O cruel Isabella, that you jilt me

For the sake of a new love.
But now I go to the wildest mountains,
So that in my last hour
Through my ruin, cruel woman,
Your wish shall be fulfilled.

ACT TWO, Scene Two. Cap. Cardone & Zanni

Cap. Come here my handsome Zanni.
Zan. To tell you the truth, I can not.
Cap. Why can't you?
Zan. I go there—to the tollhouse, oh uh oh uh.
Cap. Come here eunuch, slave!
Zan. But Sir Captain, I do not rave.
I'm whole and well.
Cap. What the devil do you mean well?
I mean one who serves his Lord.
Zan. Oh! I see! Is it time for church?
I don't hear the bell.
Cap. Do you jest with me? I mean slave, menial!
Zan. Ah ha! I understand, you mean servant.
Cap. At last! You understand me.
Quickly, rap you on Isabella's door.
Zan. Wrap myself on the door? This simpleton?

Cap. Fool, strike or beat on the door!
Zan. I'll knock, I'll knock, I'm only confused
With this Parroteese.
Cap. What do you mean Parroteese?
Zan. I mean that which they speak in Portugal.
Cap. I would say four words to her.
Zan. I fear for my rear.
Cap. Fear nothing!
Because with this blade
I only intend to kill a thousand men.
Zan. O Sir Rapier, our good fortune!
Cap. How so, Zanico?
Zan. The door opens; there is Isabella.
Cap. What a wonderful sight!
Zan. Will there be anything else? I am yours.
Cap. No, nothing my Zanico.
Go with God!



ACT TWO, Scene Three. Captain Cardon, Isabella

Isa. Here is the Captain,
Here is my fortune
And my expectation, I kiss your hand.
Cap. Good day, my lady.
I would like to speak to you,
Kind, tender, and beautiful Isabella.
Isa. Why do you play the passionate part,
Ungrateful lover?
When another woman loves and worships you.
When a new love has stirred your heart.
O tyrant, O cruel one,
What good does it do me to be faithful?
Cap. What's this? What are you doing madame?
By your life, with whom have you spoken?
Oh dear lady, you kill me.
Isa. Behold, how he plays his part
And thereby shame colors not his cheeks.
Cap. Heaven help me, on my word of honor!
I love no woman but you.
Isa. I spoke in jest
In order to put you to the test.
Cap. Trouble me no more with such jokes.
For little more
And I would have died of sorrow.
Isa. When you are accustomed to showing courage
Against muskets and cannons,
Why then do you fear the jests of love?

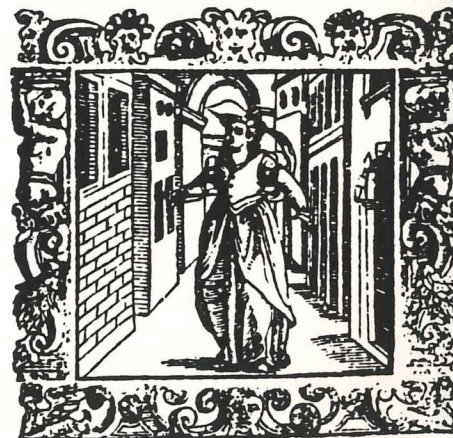
Cap. Because love conquers all.
Isa. Love I understand not.
But you have conquered me.
Now I make you master of this life,
Of this heart.
Cap. Tell me my lady
To whom belongs this bosom?
Isa. To Captain Cardon.
Cap. And the eyes and ears?
Isa. To Captain Cardon
Cap. The mouth and the nose?
Isa. To Captain Cardon
Cap. The brow, the head?
Isa. To Captain Cardon
Cap. The hair?
Isa. To Captain Cardon
Cap. The teeth and lips?
Isa. To Captain Cardon
Cap. The life and the heart?
Isa. To Captain Cardon
Cap. Oh, I'm most contented
And most beloved
And most proud of my lady!



ACT TWO, Scene Four. Isabella alone

To me no more hope remains.
Why should I delay my dying?
Ah Lucio, Ah Lucio, now will my soul
Forthwith take wings
And follow you. There where you are now,
Free of all mortal attributes.
Can you clearly see that I remained true to you?

And that you were cruel
To believe too much, to die too hastily?
This blade shall now kill me;
Already I feel death's presence.
Be merciful to me, venerable mother.
Free my spirit from fretful care
And welcome the warm blood and grieving soul.



ACT TWO, Scene Five. Frulla, Isabella

Frul. Isabella, what are you doing?
Not that! Why would you kill yourself?
Isab. Oh. Let me die!
Frul. You must not do that.
Isab. But I will do it.
Frul. Put down the weapon.
Isab. The weapon will be the instrument of my death.
Frul. And Lucio will be the instrument of your life.
Isab. How can life and death go together?
Frul. By enjoying your longed-for Lucio alive.
Isab. What? Lucio lives?

Frul. He lives, now be joyful.
Isab. How? Did he not die?
Tell me, dear Frulla.
Frul. He doubtless wanted to throw
Himself into the gorge,
But some herdsmen
Who were there in the vicinity
Heard his loud and anguished laments
And hurried to help him so quickly
That his mindless desires
Were thwarted.
Isab. Oh fortunate Isabella!
Since my beloved lives,
I will also live, and through him
My life will blissful be.

ACT THREE, Scene One. Pantalone, Francatrippa, Gratiano

Pan. Since I have now settled this marriage
And have deposited a part of the dowry
In the bank of the Griffin,
I want to arrange the wedding.
Hey, Francatrippa, invite my relatives.

Fran. Yes sir, no sir.
And my own relatives?

Pan. What kind of relatives do you have?

Fran. I count two comrades
As very close relatives.

Pan. Who are they then?

Fran. Sir, I'll tell you.
Gandai and Padella
Zany Piatel and Gradella
Zany Bucal and Bertol
Burati and Zanuolo
Relichin and Simu
Zampetta with Zanù
Frignocola and Zambù
Fritada and Pedrolin
With twelve brothers.

Pan. Oh my, my, my!
Two of them?

Fran. Ah yes, dear sir.

Pan. Silence! You dog!

Fran. Oh sir -- there he is now! The Doctor
Who plays on the zambaiu.

Pan. What is a zambaiu?

Fran. Do you hear? Do you hear?
Tiencu trencu tren
Trench trench trench.

Pan. Good day, dear son-in-law.
O dear Doctor, do me a favor.

Gra. Of course, of course, of course.
Yes sir, yes sir, yes sir.

Pan. Do sing a bit.
A little madrigal.

Gra. Yes, I'll sing to my beloved.

Pan. Hey, Francatrippa,
Go into the house and tell my daughter
To go out on the balcony as someone
Is feeling jolly on her account.



ACT THREE, Scene Two. Gratiano, Pantalone, Francatrippa

Gra. Even in life's midst so dear
One feels the shades of death too near,
I would like without the pain
To have, O Vince, the joys again,
But spirits give me awful sorrow,
And yet I drink in such great haste,
Forgetting the torments of the morrow,
So sweet is its eructed taste.

Pan. What a beautiful voice,
Graceful, polished, and sonorous.
Through your sweet refinement

Love steals
Into my heart,
And your speech, my! You are a second
Anguillara!

Fran. Sir, sir Doctor!

Gra. What do you want, French Tripe?

Fran. The bride says that
We should all go inside.

Gra. It's so good, O so good,
What a way, Good to me.



ACT THREE, Scene Three. Francatrippa, Hebrews inside their house

Fran. Tich tach toch
Tich tach toch
O people of the Hebrews,
Get up, open up quickly like respectable
people.
Or else I'll break down the door.

Hebr. Ahi Baruchai
Badanai Merdochai.
An Biluchan
Ghet milotran
La Baruchabà.

Fran. I will not be able to conduct any business
Because you are holding Synagogue?
Oh! That the devil would throttle you.
Tiche tach, tiche toch.
Tiche tach, tiche toch.

Hebr. Oth zorochoth
Aslach muflach
lochut zorochoth
Calamala Balachot

Fran. Hey, Hello; Mr. Aron

Hebr. Who knocked on the door?

Fran. It is I, it is I, Mr. Aron.

Hebr. What do you want, what do you say?

Fran. I would like to pawn this hammock with you.

Hebr. O Samuel, Samuel
Come down to us, come down to us.
Adonai, there is a Gentile
Who has come with a flynet
That he wants to pawn.
Now is the Sabbath, we can not.



ACT THREE, Scene Four. Isabella, Lucio

Isa. Wait, what do I see?
Is it perchance Lucio? By his clothes
He does not look like him.

Luc. I see someone who looks like Isabella,
Who alone can end my torment.
She comes toward me; I'll go nearer.

Isa. Lucio?

Luc. O Isabella.

Isa. Light of my life.

Luc. O refuge of my misery.

Isa. Is it you?

Luc. Yes, it is I.

Isa. Is it Lucio or his ghost?

Luc. Are you still in doubt?

Isa. I am afraid.

Luc. Why are you afraid?

Isa. Because I love you.

Luc. Let us love without fear, my darling!

Isa. O my Lucio.

Luc. O my Isabella.

Isa. What calamitous incident
Almost led you to your death?

Luc. Ah, let us not revive such great sorrow.
Rather, fulfill your promise to be mine.

Isa. Here it is, never will I belong to another.

Luc. My dear, I accept it.
There comes Lelio now.
His arrival is timely, since, if for us
He has suffered great anxiety,
May he now enjoy the sweet wedding feast.



ACT THREE, Scene Five. Lucio, Lelio, Isabella

Luc. Be joyful with me signor Lelio,
For now Isabella is mine.

Lel. I am joyful and I'm so pleased
With this match
That I can scarcely express my joy.

Luc. I thank you and bid you to my wedding.
Now call the guests outside.

Lel. Come out! Everyone come out!

All. Here we are, what is going on Sir?

Luc. Be cordially welcome!
This is my bride.
Do her the honor, I ask you, and present
Her some token as a sign of your joy.

Lel. As the first, I proffer you a red rose
Which the beauty of your countenance equals.

Isa. I kiss your hand.

Pam. And I present you with this glove that
I am taking off.
It belonged to my grandfather.

Isa. I thank you, Sir.

Nisa. This puppy that I give you
Will help you keep true to Lucio.

Isa. I give you a thousand thanks.

Cap. Take three thousand maravedis
O beautiful woman.
And spouse of my Lucio.

Isa. You are so very generous.

Ped. I can give you nothing more beautiful
Than this radish.

Isa. Many thanks!

Gra. I offer you a pair of lensless glasses
To show my honor to the pair.

Isa. A very nice present.

Luc. Let's all go in now!
And you, friendly and honorable spectators,
Kindly give us a sign
That our piece has pleased you
By letting us hear your loud cheers
And applause.

